CLAIMS

1. A laser comprising:

an active medium;

a material operationally coupled to said medium and having a transmittance property that varies in response to incident energy; and

means disposed external to said medium for applying energy to said material.

2. The invention of Claim 1 wherein said material is a saturable absorber.

3. The invention of Claim 1 wherein said means for applying energy is a diode laser.

4. The invention of Claim 3 wherein said means includes focusing optics disposed between said diode laser and said material.

5. The invention of Claim 4 further including a dichroic beamsplitter for directing said energy to said absorber material.

6. The invention of Claim 1 wherein said means is a quasi-monolithic diode laser assembly ring.

7. A modulated saturable absorber controlled laser comprising:

an active medium;

a saturable absorber material disposed within said medium; and

a light source disposed external to said medium for applying energy to said absorber.

8. The invention of Claim 7 wherein said light source is a diode laser.

9. The invention of Claim 7 further including focusing optics disposed between said light source and said material.

10. The invention of Claim 9 further including a dichroic beamsplitter for directing said energy to said absorber material.

11. The invention of Claim 7 wherein said light source is a quasi-monolithic diode laser assembly ring.

12. A method for lasing including steps of:

providing an active medium;

operationally coupling to said medium a material having a transmittance property that varies as a function of incident energy; and

applying energy to said material.

13. The invention of Claim 12 further including the step of applying said energy after pumping said medium.